

WITH THE FARMERS

By Prof. W. F. MASSEY

Waterproofing Cotton Cloth.

"Can you tell me how to make a seed bed cover waterproof, either cheesecloth or muslin, so as to keep it from blowing away? I made three large ones and painted them with linseed oil, but they seem to fall to pieces very soon. In fact, sooner than I expected. When not oiled, I understand that the cottony part of the cloth will not make cotton cloth last long. The first one I made burned up after I had laid it down to protect it from the rain. It was on a clothes line, and fortunately I did not take it into the house. It burned during the night. Folding up a mass of cloth with fresh oil on it is a pretty sure way to start spontaneous combustion. I have used the following recipe with good results. Raw linseed oil (three parts), acetate of lead (one part), and a little of the best kerosene. Then add the remainder of the oil and the resin. Melt completely in an iron pot over a gentle fire. Strain the cloth through a fine sieve and apply the mixture hot with a broad brush. It will be dry in twenty-four hours, but must not be folded till dry. To make a more perfect job, turn the cloth and give a coat on the other side after the first coat is dry. This will make the cloth waterproof, but as to the heat, I am not sure that it will be greatly increased."

Southern Corn Belt.

With the great increase of interest in the corn crop in the South and the wonderful crops produced by the boys in the corn clubs, it looks as though the South is to become the great corn belt of the country. We are not only used to the very disastrous droughts and hot winds that afflict the West at times, but the Department of Agriculture has published the fact that corn crops grown in various States the past season, and the greatest failure has been in the Western corn belt, where Kansas shows an average crop of but three bushels an acre, while North Carolina averaged twenty bushels and Virginia twenty-six bushels and Maryland thirty-three bushels an acre. Nebraska averaged but fifteen bushels an acre. We had drought, too, but nothing like the disastrous drought of the West. With improved methods of farming, there is no reason why the South should not become the great corn belt of the country, for we not only have a more certain rainfall, but the crop is never killed by frost, as it often is in the Northwest. Kansas is evidently well adapted to corn, but is no longer "the West young man," but now South and help in the tide of the movement that is sweeping over the whole Southland.

Rye in the Silo.

"Will rye, cut when in bloom, make good silage? No, I tried it once and never expect to do so again. I had a considerable area in which I had been cutting green for the silage. Having more than I could use in this way, I put it into a silo, filling it about half full. Later the thing was completed. When I had fed the corn and reached the silage, it had turned up her nose at the rye and refused to eat it, and the whole was used in the manure heap as bedding. Fortunately I had two other silos filled with corn and had no loss of any amount except the loss of my experience. Rye at best is poor feed, and in the silo is of no value at all."

Volunteer Parsnips.

"I had some parsnips last year which ran to seed and were falling. I found the ground made a volunteer crop this season. Will these volunteer roots be poisonous? In fact are parsnips poisonous under any conditions? Wild parsnips are reported to be poisonous, but I do not believe the volunteer wild ones will be poisonous when cooked. The cultivated parsnips have been bred up from the wild form, and a eaten raw it might be injurious. There are a number of roots that are not edible raw, but which are perfectly cooked. The tubers of the Caladium esculentum are very acid raw, but make a very wholesome dish when cooked. I do not think there will be danger from the volunteer roots. But I find that here and southward it is far better to defer sowing parsnips till June here and July further South. Sown early in spring, as they are commonly sown in the North, they may either run to seed or get woody and poor. I always sown them in June here in the Southeast corner of Maryland, and I sown early at the same time. These hardy plants make their best growth in the fall and, in fact, usually grow till Christmas and the late ones, while they may not get so large, are always of better quality than those sown early in spring."

Get a Bermuda Sod.

"I have seen Bermuda sod advertised, grown in Arizona. Will it be better to use the seed to get a sod here in Eastern North Carolina than to plant the roots? Do you think that these Arizona seed will germinate, and how many will it take to a acre and when will be the best time to sow them? I am exceedingly anxious to get a good Bermuda pasture. Have tried alfalfa and crimson clover with but little success, and think that, perhaps, Bermuda grass will fill the bill. We have an election in this county next month to decide on a stock law. If it is voted down, we will be compelled to build a \$60,000 fence to keep our stock in, and the stock in this county is only valued at \$12,000. Bermuda grass seed usually do not have a very high per cent of germination, and you should sow not less than twenty-five pounds of seed an acre. Sown them in late April, for Bermuda is a warm-weather grass, and will not go for fall sowing. You can get a better stand from what you call roots, but make roots at each joint. Roots do not make joints. You can get plenty of these all around you I suppose, and by planting them in shallow furrows in April or May, making the furrows two feet apart, they will cover the ground sooner than the seed will. But why should you fall in your section to get 'Crimson clover'? I rather suspect that it is because your soil is acid and needs lime, and being near the coast, you should be able to get oyster-shell lime cheaply. Lime the land and get the soil inoculated, and you can grow Crimson clover as well as in any other section. But if you want a permanent pasture, of course you cannot get it with Crimson clover, and the Bermuda will be better, except in winter. And you cannot grow alfalfa either without liming liberally. I do not know anything about the germinating quality of the Arizona-grown seed, but I do know that as a rule it has been found that the seed

of Bermuda grass do not have a high germinating power. It is to be hoped that your county will pass the stock law. You will never get rid of cattle ticks until all stock are kept off the range. County after county in the upper sections of the State have been rid of ticks and admitted north of the quarantine line, and the whole State can be cleaned of ticks when the farmers fully realize the importance of keeping cattle from running at large. Fencing off a county is, as you suggest, costly, and the cattle at present will hardly pay for the expense, while with the stock law the farmers will in general get more interested in bettering their stock.

"I am anxious to produce a heavy crop of cowpea seed. From what I have seen and learned, this is rather an uncertain proposition. What is your idea as to the best way to induce heavy seedling of peas? I used the Spanish peanut spoken of by you. I have never grown any of these, and would like to know if they are any better than the running varieties. They seem to be quoted very well at Norfolk. Cowpeas as a rule are not good seed makers. Sown early, they make more vine and fewer seed than if sown later. This is, near sown the first of July will usually make more peas and less vine than sown the first of June. Then the matter of fertilization has to be considered. Peas do not need nitrogen in the soil, since they can get it from the air, and on very rich land they will make immense vines and few seed, because the seed-making is done by the phosphorus and potassium rather than by the nitrogen. The only thing, then, that I can suggest is to give the peas a liberal dressing of acid phosphate and potash, say 200 pounds an acre of acid phosphate and twenty-five pounds of the muriate of potash an acre, and put them on a warm, sandy soil of only moderate fertility. I think that in this way you can get a better crop of seed than in any other way I can suggest. Spanish peanuts are now in demand from the oil mills. They grow upright and do not run like the white Virginia nuts, and are around the base of the plants. For some reason or other the cultivation of the Spanish nuts is extending rapidly, and it would seem that growers are finding them more profitable than the large white nuts."

"I ordered some ground limestone to broadcast ahead of my grain sowing, but it did not come in time. Will improved methods of sowing help to spread this with a lime spreader? I do not think there can possibly be any harm done to any plant from sowing ground limestone in any amount. The limestone is simply the natural carbonate, and has no caustic property as fresh burnt lime would have, until it too become a carbonate by air-acting. It would have been better to have the limestone in before sowing the grain, but it will be all right to spread it now."

"Improving a Virginia Farm. From Ohio: 'I am now building a house on the farm I have bought near City Point, which I asked you about some years ago. I plowed the land where the buildings are going up, and find it to be a good, rich soil, a dark silty loam, with a little clay subsoil. It has not been cultivated for years, and the broomsedge has grown up. It was burnt over last fall, and I cannot burn it again because it is not thick enough. I turn it down well, and then disk it in spring, and grow corn on it, and early potatoes instead of peanuts? Having no manure, I shall have to use fertilizer. What kind for corn or potatoes? The land is thought to have potash enough. I shall have some lime, and in that way get good prices for the corn, and will have a ready market for the potatoes. What is the best corn for the climate, and what variety of corn? I shall grow the best and crimson clover for the improvement of the soil, and will plow deeply with good plow. Do you advise cement floors in the stables, and in the manure? I prevent loss in the manure? Tell me all about the methods best adapted there for the cultivation of corn and potatoes. Will the Southern maples make good shade for the lawn? Also what blackberries and raspberries will be best there?"

"Top Dressing a Lawn. A lady writes: 'Six years ago my lawn was filled in and leveled with white clay and sodded with beautiful grass. I do not know how the sod was treated, as my husband attended to that, but for two years the grass was beautiful. We were away for three years, and coming back found only little patches of grass and hard clay showing in the bare spots. I had these bare spots spaded up and mixed stable manure in the soil and sowed grass seed. It came up beautifully, and now I want to know what sort of topdressing I should give the lawn in the spring. The elm trees in my yard were infested with caterpillars that did not seem to hurt the trees, but kept me busy keeping them off my lawn. Can I do anything to prevent their appearance? There is no better topdressing for the lawn than a good article of raw bonemeal applied at rate of 500 pounds an acre. You do not give the size of the lawn or I could be exact. Better have some one hunt for the caterpillars and destroy them and in this way lessen the number."

"I have seen Bermuda sod advertised, grown in Arizona. Will it be better to use the seed to get a sod here in Eastern North Carolina than to plant the roots? Do you think that these Arizona seed will germinate, and how many will it take to a acre and when will be the best time to sow them? I am exceedingly anxious to get a good Bermuda pasture. Have tried alfalfa and crimson clover with but little success, and think that, perhaps, Bermuda grass will fill the bill. We have an election in this county next month to decide on a stock law. If it is voted down, we will be compelled to build a \$60,000 fence to keep our stock in, and the stock in this county is only valued at \$12,000. Bermuda grass seed usually do not have a very high per cent of germination, and you should sow not less than twenty-five pounds of seed an acre. Sown them in late April, for Bermuda is a warm-weather grass, and will not go for fall sowing. You can get a better stand from what you call roots, but make roots at each joint. Roots do not make joints. You can get plenty of these all around you I suppose, and by planting them in shallow furrows in April or May, making the furrows two feet apart, they will cover the ground sooner than the seed will. But why should you fall in your section to get 'Crimson clover'? I rather suspect that it is because your soil is acid and needs lime, and being near the coast, you should be able to get oyster-shell lime cheaply. Lime the land and get the soil inoculated, and you can grow Crimson clover as well as in any other section. But if you want a permanent pasture, of course you cannot get it with Crimson clover, and the Bermuda will be better, except in winter. And you cannot grow alfalfa either without liming liberally. I do not know anything about the germinating quality of the Arizona-grown seed, but I do know that as a rule it has been found that the seed

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AUDITOR ASSERTS STATE'S TAX RATE CAN BE REDUCED

(Continued From Tenth Page.)

At the request of R. C. Stearnes, Superintendent of Public Instruction, the committee met Friday afternoon at 3 o'clock for consideration of appropriations for public schools. The auditor of \$112,000 for the sinking fund for retirement of the State debt was passed by, Senator Fletcher contending that a larger amount should be appropriated for the more rapid retirement of the heavy interest-bearing bonds. General Charles J. Anderson spoke of the value of the Virginia Military Institute to the State, and the increasing demands on its space and accommodations.

Auditor Moore advised the committee that the appropriation of \$50,000 for pensions had not been used. About \$30,000, which balance reverted. If any change were considered in the rate of pensions, Mr. Moore suggested that it be by a flat rate, instead of a percentage increase. He warned the committee, however, that there was never a better time to economize than when the State has a balance.

At the afternoon session the Confederate Memorial Literary Society presented a petition for funds to erect a memorial tablet to certain historic State buildings.

Has Impossible Duties. Dr. J. T. Martin, of the State Board of Charities and Corrections, said that the law required an impossibility when it stated that he must visit regularly the 252 jails, almshouses, hospitals and similar institutions belonging to the State, cities and counties, as well as the 100 public charitable institutions and children's homes in the State. He asked \$2,000 for employment of a field assistant.

During the year, he said, he had carried on the investigation into the number and condition of the feeble-minded, and had taken 150 colored children from jails and placed them in proper homes. He also asked for \$2,000 for surgical and medical services. He said, but a small fund was necessary for expenses, such as the purchase of a brace.

W. McDonald Lee, State Commissioner of Fisheries, delighted the committee by saying that he had too much money. His annual appropriation for salaries and maintenance of \$45,000 he thought could be safely cut to \$40,000, as the State had purchased and equipped its boats, and now only had the maintenance to care for.

For Harrisonburg Normal. Former State Senator George B. Keegel and President Julian A. Purcell made a strong appeal for the Harrisonburg State Normal and Industrial School for Women. For annual maintenance, they asked an increase from \$35,000 to \$40,000. The institution has no debt or obligation, but is greatly in need of building repairs. Twenty students, only 115 of whom are provided with dormitory space on the school grounds. The first need was for a dormitory building to cost \$65,000. Then there was needed a general building, containing an assembly room, library, central power and light plant, and laundry, costing \$60,000. Other lesser improvements made \$188,000, part of which Senator Keegel said was due to the fact that the General Assembly cut short its debt that \$20,000 per year. He asked \$25,000 for the year and \$50,000 next year. In the five years of its existence, the school has had 1,365 students from ninety-six counties, and every city, and has been crowded to its capacity, using the bowling alleys and porches for classrooms.

The Insane Asylum. The needs of the various State asylums for the insane were gone into by the committee in detail. C. D. West, of the board of directors of the Eastern State Hospital at Williamsburg, asked for \$2,500 for repairs to the plumbing and floors in the Montague building, \$1,500 for sewerage, an addition to the infirmary in the female ward, to cost \$7,000, and \$4,000 for an ice plant. During the second year he wanted \$10,000 for a dormitory for employees.

Dr. J. S. DeMarquette, superintendent of the Western State Hospital at Staunton, was more liberal in his desires. He had an \$8,000 surplus in his maintenance account, and could get along on the per diem allowance of former years. He is just completing a "noisy house" for women patients, built by patients, at a cost for material and supervision of \$12,000, which he said by contract would have cost \$25,000. It was his rule to give fully 50 per cent of the patients something to do, though only about 70 per cent could do worth while. He asked \$15,000 for a "noisy house" for males, to be erected leisurely during the next

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two years by patient labor, and \$15,000 for purchase of 200 acres to add to the farm.

Employment the Best Treatment. He was certain that employment, preferably in the open air, was the best possible treatment for the mentally afflicted, and wanted \$12,000 for an industrial building for indoor work in the winter, suggesting that those able to work put in half a day for the State to pay the cost of their keep, and thus keep their self-respect, and work the other half time for themselves or their families. He also wanted a building for the female ward, to cost \$7,000, and \$4,000 for an ice plant. During the second year he wanted \$10,000 for a dormitory for employees.

Dr. J. C. King, superintendent of the Southwest State Hospital at Marion, asked for \$18,000 each year for sepiotic labor, for male and female new and recoverable cases as distinguished from the old and more or less helpless cases, which are merely custodial, and not for treatment. He also asked \$15,000 to buy farm land adjoining the institution.

Dr. W. P. Brewster, of the Central State Hospital for colored patients, at Petersburg, told of frightfully overcrowded conditions. Because of increased numbers, his maintenance estimates rose from \$100,000 to \$165,000, based on 1,565 patients, at a per capita cost of \$105 per annum. He asked \$58,800 for buildings and improvements in the next two years. The last general assembly provided no money for insurance at the institution, and the board had to drop policies for \$70,000 which had been carried. He asked \$4,000, which would provide insurance of \$10,000 for five years. Senator Moore suggested that the State might carry its own insurance on schools and State institutions. Senator Harman thought one fire such as that at Petersburg, would cost \$250,000, and any fund the State might lay aside.

Growth of Epileptic Colony. Dr. A. S. Fridley, of the State Epileptic Colony in Amherst, asked for \$11,000 to meet the deficit of last year, because of the rapid growth of this new institution. He asked for maintenance, \$165,000 the first year and \$174,800 the second. For buildings and improvements he asked \$28,800 the first year and \$20,000 the second. He asked a new building containing an amusement hall, chapel, schoolrooms, etc., to cost \$10,000; repairs and enlargements to the administration buildings, to cost \$8,000; an ice plant, to cost \$3,000; a building for the feeble-minded girls and women, strongly urged by the State Board of Charities and Corrections as a State need not met at any other institution, to cost \$18,000. He also reported a balance due on the site of \$15,000. When the colony was established it was expected to sell the Maryland property at Staunton and devote the proceeds towards the purchase of the Amherst property, now used. The Supreme Court recently decided that Dr. Markland had left his property for the use and benefit of the Western State Hospital at Staunton, and that he could not divert it. Dr. Fridley said he would have nearly three times as many patients when improvements now under way are completed. The colony already had 160 inmates in the epileptic division. The home for feeble-minded boys and men is soon to be opened.

After hearing further from Robert Gilliam, of Petersburg, in regard to the general needs of the State hospitals for the insane, the committee met for a day, and the Governor went into executive session to formulate that portion of the appropriation bill relating to these and other institutions, the needs of which have already been presented. The hearing

will be resumed this morning at 11 o'clock, when Superintendent J. B. Wood, of the State Penitentiary, and others are to be heard.

SCHMIDT ANXIOUS TO TELL HIS STORY Will Go on Stand in Own Behalf If Permitted by Counsel.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.) New York, December 17.—If permitted to do so by his counsel, Hans Schmidt, on trial for the murder of Anna Amuller, will take the witness stand to-morrow in his own behalf. He informed Theodore J. McManis, one of his lawyers to-day that he had received a "Divine inspiration" directing him to testify.

Schmidt refuses, however, to discuss with his counsel the nature of the testimony he will give if called as a witness. W. M. K. Orest, leading counsel for the defense, had not reached a definite decision to-night as to whether Schmidt will be permitted to tell his own story.

Judge Foster agreed to an adjournment shortly after 1 o'clock to-day to give lawyers for both sides time to agree upon how many of the depositions taken before the consul at Frankfurt bear upon the question of the defendant's sanity.

After returning to his cell in the Tombs, Schmidt complained of being ill. Dr. McGuire, the prison physician, visited him in the afternoon. It is not believed that his condition is such, however, as to cause a delay in the trial.

Mrs. Elizabeth Schaller, Schmidt's sister, continued her testimony, which was not changed by the cross-examination. "He told me one day," she said, "that he had seen the head of the Saviour on an altar set in blood, and that it was the most beautiful sight he had ever seen."

Mrs. Schaller said she believed Hans really had been ordained by St. Elizabeth.

GOVERNOR WILL RETURN SOON AND BELIEVE DAUGHTERIDGE OF CARES OF STATE. (Special to The Times-Dispatch.) Raleigh, N. C., December 17.—Governor Craig writes from Hot Springs, Ark., that he will be in the executive office here on Saturday of this week to resume the reins of State government. The Governor says he has been greatly improved through the special treatment for rheumatism received at Hot Springs.

Roberts Store at MAXMEADOWS. Will Mull Gets Away With \$25 Worth, but Sheriff Catches Him. (Special to The Times-Dispatch.) Wytheville, Va., December 17.—Tilly's store, at Max Meadows, was broken into on Sunday night, and \$25 worth of goods, consisting of clothing, hardware and other items, was stolen. Sheriff R. S. Davidson, responding to a call, went to Max Meadows, and finally, getting a clue, trailed Will Mull, a

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